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Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, source of all goodness, use our lawmakers today for Your glory. Make them undaunted people who strive to know Your will and experience Your power. Provide them with exactly what they need to accomplish Your purposes. May they receive Heaven's approbation for their faithful service to You and country. Lord, transform their intractable problems with solutions from Your throne. We commit the work of this day to You, receiving Your strength to honor Your Name.

And, Lord, we thank You for the faithfulness of our summer pages. Bless these young people as they prepare to leave us.

We pray in Your generous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The President pro tempore.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1460

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1460) to provide for the modernization of the energy and natural re-

sources policies of the United States, and for other purposes.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Rao nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Neomi Rao, of the District of Columbia, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until the cloture vote will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, Senators and the White House are continuing discussions on the path forward for bringing relief from ObamaCare and its collapsing markets. We have made good progress, and we will keep working. As we do, our focus will remain on the major ObamaCare problems that continue to hurt Americans all across our country.

Under ObamaCare, premiums have skyrocketed. Over the past several years, ObamaCare has caused premiums to climb by an average of 105 percent in the vast majority of States on the Federal exchange, and it has caused them to triple in some States.

Next year, ObamaCare is expected to raise premiums again, as high as 30 percent or greater in States like Connecticut and Virginia, by as much as 40 percent or greater in Maine and Iowa, and by as much as an astonishing 80 percent in New Mexico. Obviously, Americans deserve a lot better than that.

Under ObamaCare, choices have diminished, even disappeared, in States all across our country. ObamaCare has left 70 percent of counties with little or no insurance options on the exchanges this year. Even worse, next year, dozens more counties could have zero choice at all—potentially leaving thousands trapped, forced by law to purchase ObamaCare insurance but left without the means to do so. For instance, as we learned just yesterday, as many as 14 of Nevada's 17 counties could now be left without any insurance options under ObamaCare at all in 2018. Americans deserve a lot better than that.

Under ObamaCare, mandates have forced families into plans they don't want or can't afford, preferred doctors have become less accessible to many

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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